

STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO IMPROVE THE EFFICACY OF ACCOUNTABLE AUTONOMY IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

Accountable autonomy, also known as participatory decision making, gives control of individual local schools to the local community.¹ The accountable autonomy method was derived from business theory that devolved authority in the private sector from management to workers.² Workers with authority over how they worked and what they did were more content and more productive.³ Chicago Public Schools switched to accountable autonomy for local school governance in 1989 following passage of the Chicago School Reform Act.⁴ The hope was that through active participation in the decision-making process, local school control could produce the best results for local children.⁵ A Local School Council, or LSC, was created to govern each school in Chicago. Each LSC is comprised of the school principal, two teachers, six parents and two additional community members. The parents and community members are selected through community-wide elections.⁶

Ideally, each LSC is supposed to use the deliberative problem solving process. Each LSC must be able to identify and prioritize problems, then propose, justify and select provisional strategies to solve those problems. The local school then incorporates the strategies into the curriculum.⁷ Once these strategies are implemented, the LSC is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the changes. The LSC must generate an assessment of the changes to allow the rest of the community to critique the progress of the school. The LSC should involve the community critique in its own reflection on the school's progress, and begin the deliberative process again.⁸ The deliberative process requires that LSC members are capable of reasonable and rational discussion, and able to justify their proposals to remove concerns of merely promoting private interests.

The specific roles of the LSC include: hiring and firing a principal, allocating the school's discretionary money, determining the allocation of staff resources and creating a school improvement plan.⁹ It is in this last role that the LSC actually assumes autonomous control for the direction of the school. The school improvement plan creates

¹ S. Raja Krishnamoorthi, *Making Local School Councils Work: The Implementation of Local School Councils in Chicago Public Elementary Schools*, 29 J.L. & EDUC. 285, 291 (2000).

² *Id.* at 291.

³ *Id.*

⁴ See 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. ANN. 5/34-2.2 (West 1998).

⁵ Krishnamoorthi, *supra* note 1, at 291; see also, Lani Guiner, *Admissions Rituals as Political Acts: Guardians at the Gates of Our Political Ideals*, 117 HARV. L. REV. 113, 217 (2003).

⁶ *Local School Councils*, at

http://www.cps.k12.il.us/AboutCPS/Departments/OSCR/local_school_councils.html

⁷ ARCHON FUNG, EMPOWERED PARTICIPATION 61 (2004).

⁸ *Id.* at 63.

⁹ *Id.*

a vision for the school, establishes goals and a system for monitoring the progress of the school.¹⁰ Through this plan, the LSC takes control over designing the curriculum, professional development and implementation of new instructional strategies.¹¹

In an accountable autonomy system, the central administration assumes a more supportive role, providing no actual direction to the school. The contrary traditional model is the command and control system. This system creates a hierarchy where principals are responsible to the superintendent and not the community. In the traditional model, directions for each school typically come from the superintendent, and neither the principals nor the local community have much influence in guiding the direction of local schools. Not all the vestiges of the command and control system have been removed in Chicago Schools. Even when accountable autonomy was established in Chicago Public Schools, the superintendent reserved veto power over the LSC's selection of a principal.¹² The school board has also been authorized by more recent legislation to set minimum standards for principals.¹³

Until recently few studies have tested the connection between accountable autonomy and student achievement.¹⁴ A majority of these studies concluded that LSCs do not function as intended and do not lead to higher student achievement.¹⁵ One study of accountable autonomy found no systematic patterns of improvement in any of the major outcome indicators in Chicago schools, including attendance, graduation rates, and achievement.¹⁶ Most recently, Archon Fung released the results of his in depth case studies of accountable autonomy in both Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Police Department. To implement accountable autonomy in police departments, each police beat is directed in part by a meeting of citizens who prioritize local problems, deliberate on possible solutions, and work with the police to implement those solutions. In *Empowered Participation*, Fung concludes that while accountable autonomy has not produced significant improvement in achievement in Chicago schools, accountable autonomy can produce positive results and innovation in poorly performing schools in the Chicago public school system if certain conditions are satisfied.¹⁷

Fung noted in his study that schools governed by effective LSCs got better results than schools under the traditional command and control model.¹⁸ Fung also found that accountable autonomy improves the voices of many community members who may not otherwise get the chance to be involved in the improvement of their community.¹⁹ He

¹⁰ *Id.* at 61.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Chicago School Reform Act Highlights*, at <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/resources/reformact.htm>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Krishnamoorthi, *supra* note 1, at 292.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Joan Fitzgerald, *The Costs of Educational Quality – Funding Public Schools: Politics and Process*, at <http://www.curp.neu.edu/sitearchive/staffpicks.asp?id=1332> (reviewing KENNETH WONG, *FUNDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS: POLITICS AND PROCESS* (1999)).

¹⁷ FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 224.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

believes empowered participation is a key reason to seek ways to improve the LSC and the implementation of accountable autonomy in Chicago.²⁰ When community members are invested and involved in the success of local schools, students in those schools often experience a higher rate of success.²¹

Part I of this paper will examine the general problems Fung identified with implementing accountable autonomy in Chicago schools. Part II will identify specific problems in Chicago LSCs that may serve as areas for improvement. In Part III, I will share ideas for general areas of reform to improve the effectiveness of accountable autonomy in schools. Finally, in Part IV, I lay out three ideas for specific improvements to the structure of LSC and the way LSCs are implemented in Chicago. To form these improvements, I rely on the few successes that Fung found in the implementation of accountable autonomy in Chicago schools and Chicago police beats, as well as other leading authorities on school governance. I believe these improvements have the potential to turn past minimal gains under accountable autonomy into sustained and substantial gains.

I. GENERAL PROBLEMS WITH IMPLEMENTING ACCOUNTABLE AUTONOMY IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A number of problems with implementing accountable autonomy reduced the overall success of local autonomy.²² One common problem was the difficulty in mobilizing citizens. Beyond the high number of citizens participating in the initial elections as voters and candidates, participation dwindled to a small number of community members in many individual schools. LSCs struggled to find a way to encourage citizens to trade their personal time for power and influence over the local schools.²³ Convincing citizens there was some benefit to participation proved to be difficult, and some studies were concerned that communities with low turnout and socioeconomic troubles would always have poor results.²⁴ A successful LSC must combat this fallacy. There is no relationship between economic advantage and LSC success.²⁵ It is important for each LSC to reach out into the community to encourage citizens to make a personal commitment to the success of local schools.

The low participation rate may be rooted in problems with conveying information about opportunities to participate and the benefits of participation. Community members lacked the basic facts about what reforms the LSC was trying to achieve, when and where the meetings were held, and how to run for an office in the LSC.²⁶ Fung also pointed out that even when community members were involved, the LSC was only effective when

²⁰ *Id.* at 4-5.

²¹ *Id.* at 224.

²² FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 224.

²³ *Id.* at 74.

²⁴ *Id.* at 75.

²⁵ Ciara Carolyn Torres, *Housing in the Heartland: An Examination of the Hollman v. Cisneros Consent Decree, The Politics of Racial Concentration and the Possibilities Offered By Democratic Experimentalism*, 17 NAT'L BLACK L.J. 98, 119 (2003).

²⁶ FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 71.

participants had the skills and knowledge necessary to deliberate and effectively solve public problems.²⁷ These skills include: interpersonal competencies, the ability to develop public-action strategies, and substantive knowledge about school budgeting, curriculum design and deliberative problem-solving methodologies.²⁸

Fung also noted that the dominance and exclusion of some groups from the deliberative process had a profound impact on the success of an LSC.²⁹ Conflicts of interest were only amplified by differences in education, aggressiveness, expertise, gender and race.³⁰ Deliberation often devolved into personal attacks, and Fung counted the lack of professionalism among community activists and organizations as a contributor to poor LSC performance.³¹ Successful LSCs overcame these difficulties and produced a dynamic restructuring of the school. Members of successful LSCs shared unified and coherent plans for school improvement, and were capable of sustained debate on the programs and goals necessary to maintain that improvement.³²

II. SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WITH IMPLEMENTING ACCOUNTABLE AUTONOMY IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The primary problem appears to be principals unwilling to let go of control. Many educators are concerned that school administrators fail to realize the full benefits of LSCs.³³ These same educators doubt that schools will ever realize these benefits unless LSCs are implemented properly.³⁴ Although other studies have considered LSC improvements, few have sought to address the structural problems that may be affecting LSC performance.³⁵

Fung found that the principal and staff often would not allow the community to get involved.³⁶ Apart from some initial hiring decisions and menial tasks, the school staff went about selecting and implementing their own curriculum without consulting the LSC or the community.³⁷ Nonprofessional members of the LSC often complained that they were not able to participate as equals.³⁸ In the face of a strong principal and staff, nonprofessional LSC members often became passive.³⁹ Rather than being the representatives of community interests, passive LSC members drew battle lines by either aligning or not aligning with the principal.⁴⁰ Fung speculated that this may be because community members lacked the capacity to make individual contributions, but the

²⁷ *Id.* at 128.

²⁸ *Id.* at 129.

²⁹ FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 125.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.* at 125-127.

³³ Krishnamoorthi, *supra* note 1, at 293.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *See id.* at 295.

³⁶ FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 143.

³⁷ *Id.* at 145.

³⁸ *Id.* at 148.

³⁹ *Id.* at 149.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 212.

remainder of his study points to the lack of a reasonable opportunity for these community members to get involved.

Decentralization is not the goal of accountable autonomy. In a decentralized school the local principal is given heightened authority to direct the curriculum and vision of the local school. In fact, many of the same roles intended for the LSC are consolidated in the hands of the principal in a decentralized school. To some observers it seems that many Chicago school administrators are taking advantage of the accountable autonomy system to create a decentralized control system.⁴¹ If Chicago had wanted decentralized schools, the Chicago School Reform Act would have been written to reflect that view.

Chicago instead decided to experiment with accountable autonomy. To have a system that looks like a decentralized school system is contrary to what was originally intended. Principals and staff must be divested of the power originally intended for the community and the LSC. The LSC should not be put in a position where its members think it is appropriate to tell the principal, "Call us when you need us."⁴²

Fung also waffles on what the real intention is for accountable autonomy in Chicago Public Schools. He expressed disappointment when the school staff at Harambee Academy acted on its own to implement the Direct Instruction program without consulting the LSC or the community.⁴³ However, he praised school staff at Traxton Elementary when they implemented a curriculum without consulting the LSC.⁴⁴ He praised the Traxton LSC for being hands-off. Fung then turns around and says that Traxton never actually implemented local control because too much power was left in the hands of the principal and school staff.⁴⁵ Apart from Fung's waffling, his criticism of Harambee Academy and critical conclusion about Traxton demonstrate the main problem. While it may have been the original intent of the School Reform Act, there is very little local community control of Chicago schools.

Overbearing staff get in the way of local control. In one school, both the LSC and school staff voted on the implementation of a particular technology program. The two bodies agreed. It was never addressed, however, what would happen if the two did not agree.⁴⁶ Which body would have been the controlling authority? Which organization was in charge of the school? If the LSC was truly in charge, why would the staff ever need to vote? The tension between whether these schools are decentralized or under accountable autonomy needs to be eliminated. These schools need to be firmly handed over to community control.

⁴¹ *Rationale and History of Chicago School Reform*, at <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/go/93-1hess.htm>

⁴² FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 160.

⁴³ *Id.* at 146.

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 162.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 172.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 164.

A second problem that concerned Fung was the reduction of parents, community and the LSC to the role of passive monitors.⁴⁷ He specifically noted that the only times where accountable autonomy was effective in schools were when the community acted as an active monitor. He gave several specific instances when the active watchfulness of parents revealed shortcomings in the operation of the local school. Parental questioning led to positive improvements with a specific teacher. Active community supervision prevented principal overreaction.⁴⁸ These instances of active monitoring were few and far between because many schools prevented nonprofessional LSC members to actively monitor the schools. In fact, nonprofessional LSC members have had to fight to gain access to the schools.⁴⁹ Only recently have they succeeded in receiving badges that allow them free entry to monitor the daily operations of their school.⁵⁰

Yet even with these two major problems, Fung found several notable successes to build upon. Community fundraising by one LSC turned a deteriorating parking lot into a grassy park.⁵¹ Of particular note was one school, where with the help of an impartial facilitator, the LSC transcended a history of bitter conflict. The facilitator knew how to implement deliberative problem solving, and with his aid the LSC began to exercise better control over the situation. The central administration acknowledged the efforts of the both facilitator and the LSC and used a hands-off punishment when the LSC was failing to make adequate progress, rather than choosing to move toward recentralizing the operation of the school.⁵² Overall, Fung found that accountable autonomy produced small but substantial gains in Chicago Public Schools.⁵³

In his conclusion, Fung states that accountable autonomy can only be successful when (1) initial conditions are favorable, and (2) a deliberative method is implemented.⁵⁴ His initial conditions hold that there will be low LSC success in neighborhoods that have high poverty and more diversity in interests (demonstrated by ethnic and racial diversity).⁵⁵ There will be greater LSC success in a wealthier neighborhood and where there is homogeneity in local interests.⁵⁶ On their face, these initial conditions leave little room for hope for schools in low socioeconomic areas. However, the limitations stemming from these conditions do not seem to match the findings of his study. While Fung has demonstrated the feasibility of using accountable autonomy, I believe he misses out on many key sources of improvement that can be derived from his study. It is my goal to delve into his findings to offer steps to improve the workings of Chicago's accountable autonomy system as currently established.

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 171.

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 166-168.

⁴⁹ Alexander Russo, *Down But Not Out, Councils See Bright Spots in Battle for Future*, CHICAGO CATALYST, March 2004, at <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/03-04/0304lsc.htm>.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 163.

⁵² *Id.* at 214.

⁵³ *Id.* at 224.

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

III. GENERAL CHANGES TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABLE AUTONOMY IN CHICAGO SCHOOLS

Not much can be done to directly change the initial socioeconomic situation or the diversity of ethnic and racial groups within a local community. However, this scenario did not prevent successful use of accountable autonomy in Chicago Police Department's beat meetings. These successes demonstrate a number of general changes that can be made to reduce the problems that arise from initial conditions.

The LSC's success depends upon the community feeling in control.⁵⁷ Increasing community control and responsiveness will ultimately require dramatic and powerful changes.⁵⁸ The LSC must be given legitimacy so that it can become a guiding coalition. The members of the LSC must be limited to those who empathize with local problems, and are not advocating a particular special interest.⁵⁹

This change must also address the lack of individual awareness in the community with the problems in schools. More sweeping and profound changes occurred in the police beat meetings because problems with local violence and crime were obvious and hit closer to home. Community members need to be put in a position where education problems hit home like crime and violence. Ms. Rivers, a community member in the Central police beat got involved with her local beat meeting after her house was firebombed when she tried to stop drug dealing and gang violence on her street. Emboldened by the presence of crime in her community, she became involved in local beat meetings and turned from a victim of crime into an outspoken activist.⁶⁰ The noted examples of passionate discussion by community members in LSC meetings have also centered around school violence. In responding to recent bullying at her school, one woman said, "We have to take responsibility for all of our children...They are our children."⁶¹

LSCs must strive to invoke similar passion when it comes to other problems facing the local school. Community members may not see local school problems hidden in the curriculum, administration, resources and facilities. For systemic change to occur, the average individual in a community must be aware of all problems within the school district. If the LSC can teach local community members how to recognize the effects of local school problems, the LSC can produce much greater community involvement. This will help the LSC avoid estranging non-parents from efforts in the local schools. A LSC committed to outreach can strengthen a community vision that education is a public good and not an enterprise limited to parents.

⁵⁷ PHILLIP C. SCHLECHTY, *SHAKING UP THE SCHOOLHOUSE 2* (2001).

⁵⁸ SCHLECHTY, *supra* note 56, at 1.

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 20.

⁶⁰ FUNG, *supra* note 7 at 155.

⁶¹ Tracey L. Meares, *Praying for Community Policing*, 90 CAL. L. REV. 1593, 1611 (2002).

Community support will enable the LSC to avoid free rider problems that lead to low participation rates and help answer the question of how much participation is actually necessary. The question remains whether, community participation is necessary only in LSC elections or also in LSC meetings. Organized bodies become less functional as group size increases, and complete participatory democracy is unfeasible. An LSC actively involved in community outreach and awareness can experiment to determine optimal levels of participation.

Accountable autonomy in Chicago Public Schools must also meet the modern purpose of schools. To produce students that are capable of participating in a highly skilled career environment, schools must invent meaningful and challenging tasks, activities and assignments. Students need to be critically analyzing a wide array of materials and skills to be judged well educated.⁶² This requires a profound improvement in the quality of work given to students, and likely in the instructional method used to reach those students. The LSC must be free to explore creative ways to improve schools, and not be limited to past instructional methods.

One general change is simply to follow the original intent of an accountable autonomy system and grant more power the LSC and to the community. The LSC will be enabled to increase its own self-efficacy.⁶³ Self-efficacy was achieved in police beat meetings by requiring community members to stand up and speak out for the changes they desired. The problems were pointed out by residents, who received aid from local police, but ultimately the community had to follow up and testify in court against local criminals and nuisance violations.⁶⁴ Giving the community the ability to speak out on the problems meant also allowing the community to participate in stamping out those problems. The LSC must be given autonomy not only to engage in discussion of problems, but also to implement solutions to those problems. Principals and staff should no longer be allowed to use an LSC as a rubber stamp.

To increase self-efficacy, the LSC must be enabled to engage in more deliberation and have the freedom to develop creative solutions to local school problems. In the police beat meetings, accountable autonomy was only effective when the community was able to direct police power in nontraditional ways.⁶⁵ One community completely overhauled a park to deter crime and drug trafficking rather than just increase police presence in the area.⁶⁶ In the same manner, an LSC needs to be able to see rewards from its creative solutions to increase the efficacy of its self-organization. The LSC should not be bound to the old methods preferred by school staff, like Direct Instruction.⁶⁷

Granting autonomy to the LSC will free it from the agenda of the school principal and staff. In beat meetings and LSCs, if the community never had an opportunity to raise

⁶² SCHLECHTY, *supra* note 56 at 53.

⁶³ Krishnamoorthi, *supra* note 1, at 292.

⁶⁴ FUNG, *supra* note 7 at 154.

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 156.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 145.

an issue, community problems were never solved. Guided impartial discussion and prioritization of problems can turn the LSC into a clearinghouse for all local school problems.⁶⁸ Guided discussions in police beat meetings often led to addressing more serious problems, while laissez-faire discussions often proved ineffective and were controlled by dominant community factions.⁶⁹ Guided discussions focused on a community-driven prioritization of problems facing the local school. Police beat meetings that allowed communities to set their own priorities got rid of self-interests. These communities addressed and solved a wider array of problems facing the community, rather than just the problems of a few dominant factions.⁷⁰

Giving more freedom to the LSC will also enable it to rise above traditional notions of prejudice. The LSC can serve an important purpose by acting on behalf of the community to propose and implement potentially beneficial programs. Some beneficial courses and curriculum (e.g. vocational programs) are often attacked as prejudicial and stigmatizing against low-income students if imposed by the central administration.⁷¹ If these programs are introduced by the LSC acting on behalf of the community, the courses and curriculum may not be seen as stigmatizing. Often times these courses improve education and reach modern education goals in many ways traditional curriculums cannot.

While the number of significant general changes necessary to improve the overall efficacy of the LSC may seem overwhelming, there are three specific reforms that can bring these changes about.

IV. SPECIFIC REFORMS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICACY OF LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS

The first step to implement these changes is to hire an impartial third-party facilitator to run LSC meetings. The facilitator will also be in charge of community outreach and education to help community members become better informed and more involved. Fung praised facilitators who engaged in deliberation-reinforcing intervention in Chicago schools. The central administration sent a facilitator to help guide LSCs when those groups were having trouble producing appropriate gains.⁷² Facilitators were instrumental in implementing the deliberative method and getting LSCs back on track. While Fung only mentions a facilitator as an intervener, his study clearly demonstrates the potential effectiveness of having a permanent facilitator for each LSC.

Fung described the three roles for the facilitator. The first is to impose the procedures of structured deliberation. The second is to mobilize those who would have been underrepresented in these processes. The final role is to promote the legitimacy and

⁶⁸ *Id.* at 157.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 185.

⁷⁰ *Id.* at 193.

⁷¹ SCHLECHTY, *supra* note 56, at 11.

⁷² FUNG, *supra* note 7 at 214.

inclusion of all factions in LSC discussions.⁷³ This first role can be fulfilled by hiring a facilitator knowledgeable in deliberative methods. In addition to the one successful LSC intervention, there were several instances where a knowledgeable facilitator helped produce profound change in police beats.

In the Traxton beat, the election of community-resident Ms. Crenshaw to be the beat facilitator resulted in an extraordinary turnaround for the community.⁷⁴ Crenshaw was very familiar with deliberative problem-solving and substantive issues in public safety.⁷⁵ The previous three months of discussion under a different facilitator had been unproductive, and focused primarily on the interests of dominant factions.⁷⁶ The election of Crenshaw as an impartial facilitator increased overall community participation and focused the beat meetings on the problems relating to entire community.⁷⁷ When she led the community in prioritizing its problems, self-interested parties lost out to the issues that were most important to the community.⁷⁸ The deliberation led by Crenshaw overran the debilitating dynamics of the previous three months.⁷⁹

The previous three months had been led by a different facilitator who was also a community resident.⁸⁰ He, however, was not familiar with deliberative techniques.⁸¹ He conducted the beat meetings in a laissez-faire manner, and individual interests overwhelmed what would have been in the community's best interest.⁸² His bare-bones agenda included mainly the interests of dominant factions, and he did not promote allow discussion of other community issues.⁸³ Comparing his lack of success to Crenshaw's overwhelming success demonstrates the power and efficacy of involving a facilitator who is knowledgeable of deliberative techniques. This comparison leaves open the question of whether it is important to have a local resident as a facilitator. Both Crenshaw and the ineffective facilitator were community residents.

The Southtown police beat had similar results to Traxton when a non-resident facilitator became involved. Roger Sanchez was a bilingual facilitator who knew how to implement the deliberative process.⁸⁴ Both African-American and Hispanic residents found him fair, impartial, and inviting.⁸⁵ Through this facilitator both community groups were able to break down a prior history of non-cooperation with the local police department to achieve substantial goals for the entire Southtown community.⁸⁶ This further demonstrates the importance of having a facilitator skilled in deliberative

⁷³ *Id.* at 218.

⁷⁴ *Id.* at 187.

⁷⁵ *Id.*

⁷⁶ *Id.* at 186.

⁷⁷ *Id.* at 188.

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 193.

⁷⁹ *Id.* at 194.

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 186.

⁸¹ *Id.*

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ *Id.* at 187.

⁸⁴ *Id.* at 201.

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ *Id.* at 202.

techniques, but also shows that that the facilitator does not need to be a resident of the community. The results in Traxton and Southtown parallel the singular success of a facilitator working with the LSC. The facilitator in that instance was not a community member, but aided in establishing deliberative norms in the LSC.

These successes raise two concerns about the principal as a facilitator. The facilitators who were successful in the beat meetings and LSCs had substantial training in deliberative techniques. It is highly unlikely that principals possess this similar training. Also, like the weak facilitator in the Traxton beat, principals may be guided by past and/or hidden agendas. There is less likelihood that a principal can be impartial. Skeptics might question the willingness of principals to follow LSC decisions that were not personally guided by the principal. However, after facilitator-led beat meetings, police officers were content to fulfill the roles and plans that were devised by the community.⁸⁷ Police officers did not vote at the meetings, but were present and were allowed a say in the discussion. In the same manner, principal and staff participating in facilitator-led meetings may also be content in implementing the decisions of the LSC.

It is also important to note that the third-party facilitators involved in beat meetings and LSCs were not as Fung describes, “maverick leaders.”⁸⁸ Impartial facilitators are not rarities, just qualified individuals.

The second role for a facilitator is to promote the participation of underrepresented groups. In both of the police beat situations discussed above, the facilitator reached out to the community. The facilitator in Traxton Beat independently organized underrepresented community groups by calling and making visits to houses and commercial businesses in the neighborhood.⁸⁹ These low-level efforts dramatically increased the proportion of underrepresented community members participating.⁹⁰ Eventually the underrepresented community members started organizing themselves in greater numbers.⁹¹ In the Southtown Beat the bilingual facilitator brought greater participation of the underrepresented Hispanic community. The facilitator reached out to the Hispanic community and sought a meeting location that would promote participation by both communities.⁹² The official duties of a principal as the manager of day-to-day activities at a school do not likely permit her to engage in outreach into the local community. The hiring of a third-party facilitator whose official duties include community outreach would help to solve this problem and to increase community participation.

The need for a permanent facilitator is also demonstrated by what happens when a facilitator is only temporary. Although the presence of the bilingual facilitator in Southtown helped to break down the mentality that the police officers were not

⁸⁷ *Id.*

⁸⁸ *Id.* at 195.

⁸⁹ FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 187.

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² *Id.* at 199.

cooperative, once the facilitator left, further deliberations failed.⁹³ When the facilitator left, tensions rose between the community and police officers. The same problem is likely to occur in schools. Once a facilitator leaves, there will be little to prevent the school principal and staff from turning community back into passive monitors and eliminating all effective deliberation.

The final role for the facilitator is to promote the legitimacy and inclusion of all parties to the discussion. It is key that facilitator is not a member of any one of the interest groups represented at the deliberation. A third-party facilitator will not take the route past school principals had in saying, “We just cannot do that.” The facilitator has no actual role in implementing any of the changes created by the LSC. The facilitator will be focused on maximizing the ability of each party to participate in the deliberation without concern for where that discussion might lead.

The inclusion of a facilitator may also promote compliance with new Chicago standards requiring LSC members to participate in training. LSC members must attend trainings in various methodologies of school governance or face removal from office.⁹⁴ However, LSC members are only required to have 18 hours of training. That limited training covers both school budgeting and curriculum design, and many nonprofessional LSC members feel that after only three days of training they lack sufficient skills to contribute to LSC discussions.⁹⁵ A skilled facilitator may be able to incorporate the training into LSC meetings or, if not, lead training sessions that address the individual needs of the members in the LSC.⁹⁶ The presence of a permanent facilitator may lead to more knowledgeable LSC members with far greater skills than they could obtain in only 18 hours. The more knowledgeable each LSC member is, the more each member will be able to contribute. Using a facilitator will promote both inclusion and LSC legitimacy.

A second method to implement changes in accountable autonomy in Chicago Public Schools is shifting the role of the principal to that of a principal teacher. This move will ultimately enable the entire school staff to be more responsive and adaptive to community interests. One principal in Chicago already agrees that schools should be responsive to their local community.⁹⁷ The first step toward this end will be to remove the principal and teachers’ voting power on the LSC. There has been a growing distrust and estrangement from school leaders, and this move will enable principals and teachers to be viewed similarly to the police in successful beat meetings.⁹⁸ Trust in administrators is key in generating school growth and increased performance.⁹⁹ While police officers were still allowed to attend and participate in meetings, they were not involved in the community prioritization of problems. As stated above, the concern that the police would be unwilling to implement these solutions never materialized and the community-created

⁹³ *Id.* at 207.

⁹⁴ Grant Pick, *Nobel Laureate, U. of I. President Behind LSC Training Law*, CHICAGO CATALYST (Sept. 1995), at <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/09-95/095upd81.htm>

⁹⁵ Krishnamoorthi, *supra* note 1, at 304.

⁹⁶ *Id.* at 303.

⁹⁷ MICHAEL FULLAN, *THE MORAL IMPERATIVE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP*, 33,34 (2003).

⁹⁸ SCHLETCHTY, *supra* note 56 at 14.

⁹⁹ FULLAN, *supra* note 95, at 42 (2003).

solutions were successful. A similar scenario can be expected to unfold in the LSC and local schools if the certain considerations are taken into account.

Another reason to change to the role of the principal to that of principal teacher follows from recent reforms in education standards. Prior to these changes, principals were seen as school managers.¹⁰⁰ The recent changes have placed an enormous burden on principals who now must not only manage a school but also guide the growth of its teachers and lead inquiry into various curriculums and instructional methods. Many academics are concerned that principals are incapable of fulfilling all these roles.¹⁰¹ Allowing the principal teacher to focus on guiding her teachers and removing many of the burdens of school governance may promote the achievement of these standards.¹⁰²

The principal teacher will be in charge of implementing the recommendations of the LSC. The school staff will not have the freedom to set its own priorities and select a curriculum, which led to trouble in the past.¹⁰³ This marks a profound departure from the typical view of the principal in schools as both a school manager and a visionary providing direction for the school. To effectuate the restructuring required for systemic change, the Chicago Public Schools and LSCs may look to implement or be guided by the career development system adopted for a brief time in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system created a three tier system of advancement to promote the career growth of teachers. Under this system, teachers reaching Career Level I were considered master teachers.¹⁰⁴ Teachers reaching Career Level II developed the skills needed to provide in-school leadership in staff development and the assessment of instructional programs.¹⁰⁵ These Level II teachers were expected to be willing to accept duties in the school that called on them to use these skills. Career Level III teachers were expected to accept a transfer to a troubled school and to provide leadership that would improve results in that school.¹⁰⁶

Applying this to Chicago schools, teachers embodying Level II characteristics would be perfect candidates for the role of principal teacher. These teachers would be knowledgeable in the skills necessary for in-school leadership, while willing to work with the LSC to implement the community's plans for the school. While this new role would differ substantially with past views of the role of the principal, it follows the modern view of the school leader. The modern school leader does not need to be charismatic and domineering, but rather nurturing and capable of sustaining inquiry in her teachers.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ *Id.* at 13.

¹⁰¹ *Id.* at 14.

¹⁰² *Id.* at 22.

¹⁰³ SCHLECHTY, *supra* note 56, at 46.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ *Id.*

¹⁰⁶ *Id.*

¹⁰⁷ FULLAN, *supra* note 95, at 7, 76.

The modern school leader needs to be the lead learner within a school, and seek to build the collaborative capacity of the school.¹⁰⁸

A Level III teacher would be an excellent candidate to be trained as a third-party facilitator for a different Chicago school. These teachers would already possess knowledge about successful schools to help guide LSCs, and when adding training in implementing deliberation, these teachers could develop into strong facilitators. Substantial working knowledge of successful schools may also allow these facilitators to provide nonprofessional LSC members with the adequate training they need to be effective participants.

Changing from principal to principal teacher will help reestablish authority in the school and community. The authority of administrators and teachers is currently in danger.¹⁰⁹ Schools are acting as if they are the only source of information, and that their knowledge is sufficient to guide students within the local community.¹¹⁰ Accountable autonomy seeks to end that by introducing the community as an additional source of information. When schools open themselves to community control and the community is invested in the school, positive changes in discipline and management will occur within the school.

The final method to implement change in accountable autonomy in Chicago Public Schools is simply leading by example. Students graduating from public schools are now required to engage in a high level of critical thinking and problem solving.¹¹¹ This type of critical analysis has not typically been required of past high school graduates. Students must possess the ability to engage in continuous and purposeful learning.¹¹² The community at-large should seek every opportunity to teach these skills and abilities to their students. A strong LSC may be the most effective method of demonstrating critical thinking and problem solving.

The deliberative process uses the same skills required for high school graduates to be successful. Accountable autonomy is an education tool in itself. The LSC and school will be teaching parents, community members, and students the same ideas, and students will get the benefit of watching the LSC engage in the deliberative process.

By implementing deliberative norms, the LSC can also seek to avoid the problems associated with emphasizing just one mode of communication.¹¹³ Discussions that require assertive arguments downplay the equally effective skills of storytelling and rhetoric often associated with minority groups.¹¹⁴ When deliberation becomes competition, speech that is assertive and confrontational becomes more valued than

¹⁰⁸ SCHLETCY, *supra* note 56, at 20, 44.

¹⁰⁹ *Id.* at 21.

¹¹⁰ *Id.* at 22.

¹¹¹ *Id.* at 4.

¹¹² SCHLETCY, *supra* note 56, at 4.

¹¹³ FUNG, *supra* note 7, at 123.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

speech that is tentative, exploratory, or conciliatory.¹¹⁵ LSCs providing each member with the capacity to get involved in deliberation will demonstrate for students how they can utilize their new deliberative skills in their future careers.

The LSC should focus on the development, control and continuous improvement of instructional strategies used in the school.¹¹⁶ An LSC should make a knowledgeable choice between a wide variety of instructional techniques.¹¹⁷ The process used by the LSC should be open and clear to students. Students will be more accepting of the new changes that are occurring in their school. They will also get to see and ask questions about the new abilities they are being asked to master. The LSC and the school staff should demonstrate to students what the skills of the 21st century are and how they are to be used.

CONCLUSION

Fung set out two guidelines to achieve success through accountable autonomy: (1) initial conditions and (2) implementing deliberative norms. While this first situation may be difficult to correct directly, combining the general and specific changes stated above can help LSCs in low socioeconomic neighborhoods achieve significant improvements in the governing local schools. Systemic change requires an LSC firmly under community control, with members who actively participate in the deliberative process, and who are not held back by an overbearing principal.

LSCs should involve greater deliberation and more creativity. Hiring a permanent facilitator for each LSC promotes the incorporation of deliberative norms and has been demonstrated to produce discussions that result in less control of the LSC by individual factions. Facilitator-led prioritization of issues will lead to solving a school's most pressing problems. Shifting the role of the principal to that of a principal teacher also removes the stumbling blocks to deliberation and creativity that have been in place since 1989. Finally, by engaging in deliberative norms, the LSC also offers its students a glimpse at what skills will be necessary to engage in the workforce when they later graduate.

LSCs should not be burdened by the agendas of principals. Hiring a facilitator promotes an open and fair deliberation among LSC members. The problems of the community, and not of the principal, will be heard and solved. The change to a principal teacher and the removal of principal and teacher voting rights on the LSC also further this goal.

LSCs should rise above traditional notions of prejudice. A knowledgeable facilitator will be able to advise the LSC on the wide range of instructional curriculums and strategies available to schools. Acting on behalf of the community, and not the principal, the LSC will be able to implement programs that work for the best interest of

¹¹⁵ *Id.*

¹¹⁶ SCHLETTY, *supra* note 56, at 35.

¹¹⁷ *Id.*

the students. Changing to a principal teacher will lead to less concern about prejudice, and students overall will gain access to new and challenging programs that will prepare them for future careers.

The LSC should also promote greater individual awareness. One role of the facilitator will be community outreach. Impartial facilitators will be seen as fair and inviting to community members who may have been estranged from the process in the past. A facilitator will be able to share how to look for problems in the school. LSC and other community members will be invited to take part in the deliberative process, and learn a skill that they need to properly govern a school and that their children need to pursue future careers. The principal teacher will be able to adopt a more modern school leadership role to support the inquiry of other teachers with the additional burdens that come from school governance.

Finally, the LSC should be organized to achieve the purpose of helping its students obtain the skills and abilities necessary for success after graduation. A facilitator-led LSC is an educational tool in itself. Students will be able to see their future skills acted out daily in the school and community.